



From the President

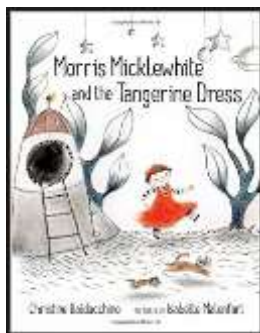
May, 2017

Shawn Martin, GEETF President – smartin@geetf.ca

Provincial Contract Extension Agreement

As you know, ETFO members voted in favour of extending our Collective Agreements for an additional two years. Our Collective Agreements were set to expire this August 31st but are now in force until August of 2019. Part of the Extension Agreement was an investment in additional special education supports for both students and teachers. Grand Erie will be getting additional funding to hire a few more special education teachers for next year. Through the staffing process, your local released officers will be working with the Board on how best to implement this additional special education funding.

Social Justice Committee News



The GEETF Social Justice Committee has purchased a copy of "Morris Micklewhite" for each elementary school in the Board. We hope it will add to your resources for all grades and assist in classroom discussions about social justice issues that engage our students and help them grow into critical thinkers and responsible members of society. The book will be sent to your Union Steward in May.

MPP Lobby Day at Queen's Park



On April 11th Tammy Stoneman (DECE President), Shawn Martin (GEETF President) and Cory Judson (GEETF Second Vice President) took part in the ETFO MPP Lobby Day.

We were able to bring the issues of violence in classrooms, inadequate special education funding, the pressing need to address student mental health, and kindergarten program concerns to the attention of Members of Provincial Parliament.

We had the opportunity to discuss issues with the following MPPs: Dave Levac (Brant), Toby Barrett (Haldimand Norfolk), Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth), Lisa Gretzky (Windsor West) and Patrick Brown (Simcoe North and Leader of the PC Party). The event was well attended by MPPs and ETFO leaders. Hopefully they heard our messages loud and clear and will take action to address these issues, increase supports for students, enhance health and safety in our schools, and improve teachers' working conditions. ETFO's plan for education, *Building Better Schools*, can be viewed at: www.buildingbetterschools.ca



As part of our LTD insurance, members have access to a Web-based mental health care program designed to assist in the prevention, early diagnosis, and ongoing management of common emotional and mental health issues. A series of questions are answered that result in possible diagnosis and treatment options. This information can then be shared with your health care practitioner. Information and resources related to Mental Health can be accessed through the GEETF Website under the tab 'Wellness' or visit:

<http://geetf.ca/wellness>

Ad Hoc Committees

The GEETF established three new committees this year: the FSL, Arts, and Social Committees. Each committee has met and planned events this year. We will continue to grow these committees next year. Please consider joining. All events are sent out through your Union Steward and posted on the GEETF website.

Reminder of GEETF Awards

Just a reminder that each year the GEETF presents awards at our year end celebration and retirement dinner. The categories that we award are:

- the arts
- the environment
- humanitarian projects
- anti-poverty initiatives

The due date for applications is May 15th. Please consider nominating a colleague.

The Issue of 'No-fills' in Grand Erie

I receive many emails and calls about the number of occasional teacher, DECE, and EA no-fills. Unfilled positions redirect LRT time from special education programming, cause disruption to teacher planning (especially prep teacher plans), force duty schedules to be rearranged, and increase risks to health and safety. We are working with the other Federation and union affiliates and the Board to find solutions. I appreciate the need to mitigate these problems in the short term and to find lasting solutions going forward.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

The following events are planned for the near future. Please go to geetf.ca to access the calendar of events. By clicking on the event, the flyer and registration will open.

May 1 to 5 - Education Week

May 1 – Education Forum (Mohawk Park)

May 1 – Talking Circles (GEETF Office)

May 2 – Fun with Visual Arts (GEETF Office)

May 4 – Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School Tour (Woodland Cultural Centre)

May 11 – FSL Social Event (Sociable Restaurant in Brantford)

May 17 – GEETF Annual Meeting (GEETF Office)

May 18 – Music Part 2 (GEETF Office)

May 29 – Mining Matters PD (GEETF Office)